

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MBABAN 00937 221519Z

41

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 IGA-02 TRSE-00

OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 L-03

DRC-01 DOTE-00 FEA-02 INT-08 /078 W

----- 125612

P R 221340Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6399

INFO AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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NAIROBI FOR REDSO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIN, EAID, BC

SUBJECT: BOTZAM ROAD

REF: A) GABORONE 0597, (B) GABORONE 0629, (C) GABORONE 0637,
(D) NAIROBI 0464, (E) MBABANE 0914, (F) STATE 105430

1. WE APPRECIATE WASHINGTON READINESS COOPERATE WITH GOB
RE TECHNICAL AND CONSTRUCTION MODIFICATIONS BOTZAM ROAD.

2. WE WISH TO STRESS THAT GOB HAS MADE A DECISION AT THE
HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL TO PROCEED WITH UPGRADING. THE VIEWS
EXPRESSED IN NAIROBI 4064 WERE KNOWN TO GOB PRIOR TO DE-
CISION. GOB DID NOT FULLY SHARE THESE VIEWS AND DECIDED IT
MUST PROCEED NOW EVEN AT THE RISK CURTAILING OTHER IMPORTANT
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. EMBASSY HAS RETIERATED POSITION TAKEN
IN RUSH TO MASIRE LETTER RE UNAVILABILITY OF AID FINANCING;
HOWEVER, GOB MAINLY SEEKING AID/W HELP IN ENSURING PRICE
TAG FOR UPGRADING REASONABLE ALTHOUGH ANY FINANCIAL HELP WOULD
ALSO BE APPRECIATED.

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PAGE 02 MBABAN 00937 221519Z

3. PERMSEC HERMANS EXPECTED TO SEEK APPOINTMENTS WITH FOLLOWING AID OFFICIALS: KNOLL, SCORDATO, DR. ADAMS, AND IF POSSIBLE ADMINISTRATOR PARKER. PURPOSE HIS VISIT WILL BE TO ADVISE AID OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND REASON FOR DECISION; REQUEST ASSISTANCE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH GROVE AND EXPLORE POSSIBILITY PARTIAL AID ASSISTANCE TOWARD TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENT. WE BELIEVE MEETINGS RESPONSIBLE LOAN AND CONTRACT OFFICERS WOULD BE USEFUL. IN VIEW OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE GOB ATTACHES THIS ISSUE BELIEVE MEETING WITH AF ALSO APPROPRIATE.

4. FOLLOWING INFORMATION PRESENTED AS ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND FOR UNDERSTANDING GOB DECISION:

A) CURRENT ZAMBIA-RSA TRAFFIC HANDLED MAINLY BY RHODESIAN CARRIERS. GOB BELIEVES IT CERTAIN THAT ZAMBIAN CARRIERS, CURRENTLY PROHIBITED FROM TRANSITING RHODESIA, WILL USE BOTZAM REGARDLESS OF CONDITION. MOREOER, CABINET DECIDED GOB WOULD BE UNABLE REFUSE ACCESS TO ZAMBIANS BECAUSE OF CLOSE POLITICAL RELATIONS AND FACT ZAMBIA HAS CONTRIBUTED TO TOTAL PROJECT.

B) GOB HAS PREPARED ROAD LIFE ESTIMATES BASED ON ANTICIPATED SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE OF TRAFFIC OVER ORIGINAL PROJECTIONS. ESTIMATES NECESSARILY SOMEWHAT SPECULATIVE. HOWEVER, AS CONSEQUENCE INCREASINGLY GOOD PROSPECTS FOR MARKETING BEEF, SODA ASH, SALT AND POSSIBLY OTHER MINERALS IN ZAMBIA, ZAIRE AND GABON, GOB HAS MADE SUBSTANTIAL REVISIONS IN ORIGINAL TRAFFIC ESTIMATES. BENEFITS WOULD ACCRUE TO BOTSWANA PRODUCERS AND EVENTUALLY BOTSWANA CARRIERS. EVEN IF ZAMBIA TENDING LOCATE NEW MINE EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS (REFTEL D), GOB BELIEVES ZAMBIA-RSA MINE EQUIPMENT TRAFFIC WILL REMAIN AT HIGH LEVEL IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. ANOTHER DETERMINING FACTOR WAS CONCERN THAT VERY HEAVY MINING EQUIPMENT PAYLOADS (UP TO 40 TONS) COULD DESTROY GRAVEL SURFACE IN ONE YEAR'S TIME. GOB ALSO DECIDED IT MAKES SENSE TO UPGRADE NOW, BEFORE SURFACE COURSE LAID, TO AVOID GREATER COSTS WHICH WOULD BE INCURRED AT LATER DATE. AS MENTIONED REFTTEL C, CABINET STILL CONSIDERS ASSESSMENT STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS SOUTHERN AFRICA OIL EMBARGO ARE VALID LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MBABAN 00937 221519Z

OVER MEDIUM AND LONG TERM.
BOLEN

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Message Attributes

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